

Dear Neighbor,

I recently was joined by my colleague Senator Don Williams at Norwich Free Academy where we spoke to school administrators, local officials, and educators about an important plan we will be advocating in the coming legislative session. It's called the S.A.F.E. Schools (Security Assistance For Education) Initiative.

If passed, this program would provide an avenue for school districts to assess their security needs and then act accordingly to address those needs. A great many of our schools are already equipped and staffed to provide a safe environment in which students can learn and develop. Yet, however confident we might be in our existing security system, school safety should be constantly examined, re-examined, and improved.

In Connecticut, local budgets are already stretched to meet an overwhelming number of demands. The state is now in a position to help financially in this important area, and hopefully we can enable that to take place. This mailer outlines our plan. As always, I welcome your input and ideas.

Sincerely,

Edith J. Prague
Edith Prague, State Senator



State Senator
EDITH PRAGUE

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From Your State Senator

EDITH PRAGUE



S.A.F.E. SCHOOLS

SECURITY ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION

Designed to improve safety and security at Connecticut's public schools, the S.A.F.E. (Security Assistance For Education) Schools Initiative will be a top priority in the 2007 session of the General Assembly. This initiative comes at a time of heightened public awareness about acts of violence at a large and varied number of schools in our state and around the country. Schools should not be left to decide between their ability to afford smaller classes or improved security. My colleagues and I are proposing to allocate \$15 million to enable schools to assess their security, provide security infrastructure improvements, and ensure school personnel receive appropriate training.

School Security Assessments

We're proposing to provide \$1 million from the FY 2007 state budget surplus to help districts pay for the costs of conducting thorough assessments of security at their schools (approximately \$7,000-\$10,000 per school).

Security Infrastructure Grant

\$10 million in bonding would help schools purchase and install security infrastructure, such as surveillance cameras, entry door buzzer systems, scan cards, panic alarms, or other systems to improve security. These funds should also be permitted to pay for necessary planning and design. The cost to provide such systems varies per school, and a state grant would be designed to reimburse each school's costs on a sliding scale.

Security Training and Equipment

\$4 million from the FY 2007 budget surplus would provide training to school personnel on how to use new security systems, procedures to improve school security, and to ensure coordination with state and local first-responders. If school leaders determine their needs include portable security devices like metal detector wands and screening machines, surplus funds could also be made available to help schools purchase such options.

School Construction Grants

As a condition of receiving a state reimbursement for a new facility, any new school construction application would be required to include plans for security infrastructure. This requirement would also be extended to applications for renovations of school entryways.